

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 USIA-15 TRSE-00 MBFR-03

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3564

INFO SECDEF

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USCINCEUR

CINCUSNAVEUR

USNMR SHAPE

UNCLAS LONDON 09767

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MCAP, UK

SUBJECT: HOUSE OF COMMONS PAPER ON UK NUCLEAR FORCE

1. ON AUGUST 22, THE HOUSE OF COMMONS EXPENDITURE COMMITTEE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAMS RELEASED ITS REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE OF THE UK NUCLEAR DETERRENT. COPIES ARE BEING POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT AND SECDEF.

2. COMMITTEE TAKES POSITION THAT FOR PRESENT UK SHOULD MAINTAIN ITS NUCLEAR FORCE AS IS, I.E., NO PURCHASE OF POSEIDON AS FOLLOW-ON TO POLARIS; NO FIFTH FBM; NO MIRV. THE REPORT CHARACTERIZES POSEIDON AS AN "EXPENSIVE LUXURY". COMMITTEE FEELS PENETRATION CAPABILITY OF UNCLASSIFIED

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POLARIS WILL BE ADEQUATE INTO 1980'S. COMMITTEE SAYS

THAT IF U.S. DROPS POLARIS, UK SHOULD SEEK TO PURCHASE
ULMS FROM U.S. COMMITTEE NOTES THAT NUCLEAR COOPERATION
WITH FRANCE IS "UNLIKELY TO BE MORE ECONOMICAL THAN
COOPERATION WITH U.S."

3. LORD CARRINGTON TESTIMONY IS WIDELY REFERRED TO BY
PRESS BUT APPARENTLY MUCH OF TESTIMONY IS CENSORED IN
PRINTED VERSION OF REPORT. IMPLICATION SEEMS TO BE
THAT CARRINGTON DID NOT PRESS FOR COMMITTEE TO MAKE
RECOMMENDATION TO PURCHASE POSEIDON. MOST NEWSPAPERS
REPORTED THAT CARRINGTON COULD NOT OR WOULD NOT DISCUSS
COSTS OF VARIOUS OPTIONS.

4. PRESS REACTED FAVORABLY TO COMMITTEE REPORT. THERE
WAS ALMOST UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS THAT RECOMMENDATIONS
WERE "SENSIBLE". MOST PAPERS NOTED THAT PUBLIC AIRING
OF FACTS ON THIS MATTER WAS HEALTHY. LONDON TIMES SAID
THAT UK NEEDS A FIRM PLAN FOR FUTURE NUCLEAR DETERRENT
BY 1976 WHEN FIRST UK FBM HAS LONG REFIT. TELEGRAPH
SAID MAIN PROBLEM IS WHAT WILL U.S. SELL TO UK IN WAY
OF ADVANCED NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY. GUARDIAN WAS DISAPPOIN-
TED THAT CARRINGTON DID NOT DISCUSS COSTS OF ALTER-
NATIVES; SAID BEST ANSWER TO NUCLEAR DETERRENT PROBLEM
WOULD BE A TRIANGULAR COOPERATION BETWEEN UK, US AND
FRANCE.

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